

AN ACT concerning regulation.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The Public Utilities Act is amended by changing
Section 9-201 as follows:

(220 ILCS 5/9-201) (from Ch. 111 2/3, par. 9-201)

Sec. 9-201. (a) Unless the Commission otherwise orders, and except as otherwise provided in this Section, no change shall be made by any public utility in any rate or other charge or classification, or in any rule, regulation, practice or contract relating to or affecting any rate or other charge, classification or service, or in any privilege or facility, except after 45 days' notice to the Commission and to the public as herein provided. Such notice shall be given by filing with the Commission and keeping open for public inspection new schedules or supplements stating plainly the change or changes to be made in the schedule or schedules then in force, and the time when the change or changes will go into effect, and by publication in a newspaper of general circulation or such other notice to persons affected by such change as may be prescribed by rule of the Commission. The Commission, for good cause shown, may allow changes without requiring the 45 days' notice herein provided for, by an order specifying the changes so to

be made and the time when they shall take effect and the manner in which they shall be filed and published.

When any change is proposed in any rate or other charge, or classification, or in any rule, regulation, practice, or contract relating to or affecting any rate or other charge, classification or service, or in any privilege or facility, such proposed change shall be plainly indicated on the new schedule filed with the Commission, by some character to be designated by the Commission, immediately preceding or following the item.

When any public utility providing water or sewer service proposes any change in any rate or other charge, or classification, or in any rule, regulation, practice, or contract relating to or affecting any rate or other charge, classification or service, or in any privilege or facility, such utility shall, in addition to the other notice requirements of this Act, provide notice of such change to all customers potentially affected by including a notice and description of such change, and of Commission procedures for intervention, in the first bill sent to each such customer after the filing of the proposed change.

For water or sewer utilities with greater than 15,000 total customers, the following notice requirements are applicable, in addition to the other notice requirements of this Act:

(1) As a separate bill insert, an initial notice in the first bill sent to all customers potentially affected by

the proposed change after the filing of the proposed change shall include:

(A) the approximate date when the change or changes shall go into effect assuming the Commission utilizes the 11-month process as described in this Section;

(B) a statement indicating that the estimated bill impact may vary based on multiple factors, including, but not limited to, meter size, usage volume, and the fire protection district;

(C) the water or sewer utility's customer service number or other number as may be appropriate where an authorized agent of the water or sewer utility can explain how the proposed increase might impact an individual customer's bill;

(D) if the proposed change involves a change from a flat to a volumetric rate, an explanation of volumetric rate;

(E) a reference to the water or sewer utility's website where customers can find tips on water conservation; and

(F) for customers receiving both water and sewer service from a utility and if the customer has an option to install a separate meter for irrigation to mitigate sewer charges, an explanation of the water and sewer utility's and the customer's responsibilities for installation of a separate meter if such a change

is approved.

(2) A second notice to all customers shall be included on the first bill after the Commission suspends the tariffs initiating the rate case.

(3) Final notice of such change shall be sent to all customers potentially affected by the proposed change by including information required under this paragraph (3) with the first bill after the effective date of the rates approved by the Final Order of the Commission in a rate case. The notice shall include the following:

(A) the date when the change or changes went into effect;

(B) the water or sewer utility's customer service number or other number as may be appropriate where an authorized agent of the water or sewer utility can explain how the proposed increase might impact an individual customer's bill;

(C) an explanation that usage shall now be charged at a volumetric rate rather than a flat rate, if applicable;

(D) a reference to the water or sewer utility's website where the customer can find tips on water conservation; and

(E) for customers receiving both water and sewer service from a utility and if the customer has an option to install a separate meter for irrigation to

mitigate sewer charges, an explanation of the water and sewer utility's and the customer's responsibilities for installation of a separate meter if such a change is approved.

(b) Whenever there shall be filed with the Commission any schedule stating an individual or joint rate or other charge, classification, contract, practice, rule or regulation, the Commission shall have power, and it is hereby given authority, either upon complaint or upon its own initiative without complaint, at once, and if it so orders, without answer or other formal pleadings by the interested public utility or utilities, but upon reasonable notice, to enter upon a hearing concerning the propriety of such rate or other charge, classification, contract, practice, rule or regulation, and pending the hearing and decision thereon, such rate or other charge, classification, contract, practice, rule or regulation shall not go into effect. The period of suspension of such rate or other charge, classification, contract, practice, rule or regulation shall not extend more than 105 days beyond the time when such rate or other charge, classification, contract, practice, rule or regulation would otherwise go into effect unless the Commission, in its discretion, extends the period of suspension for a further period not exceeding 6 months.

All rates or other charges, classifications, contracts, practices, rules or regulations not so suspended shall, on the expiration of 45 days from the time of filing the same with the

Commission, or of such lesser time as the Commission may grant, go into effect and be the established and effective rates or other charges, classifications, contracts, practices, rules and regulations, subject to the power of the Commission, after a hearing had on its own motion or upon complaint, as herein provided, to alter or modify the same.

Within 30 days after such changes have been authorized by the Commission, copies of the new or revised schedules shall be posted or filed in accordance with the terms of Section 9-103 of this Act, in such a manner that all changes shall be plainly indicated. The Commission shall incorporate into the period of suspension a review period of 4 business days during which the Commission may review and determine whether the new or revised schedules comply with the Commission's decision approving a change to the public utility's rates. Such review period shall not extend the suspension period by more than 2 days. Absent notification to the contrary within the 4 business day period, the new or revised schedules shall be deemed approved.

(c) If the Commission enters upon a hearing concerning the propriety of any proposed rate or other charge, classification, contract, practice, rule or regulation, the Commission shall establish the rates or other charges, classifications, contracts, practices, rules or regulations proposed, in whole or in part, or others in lieu thereof, which it shall find to be just and reasonable. In such hearing, the burden of proof to establish the justness and reasonableness of the proposed rates

or other charges, classifications, contracts, practices, rules or regulations, in whole and in part, shall be upon the utility. The utility, the staff of the Commission, the Attorney General, or any party to a proceeding initiated under this Section who has been granted intervenor status and submitted a post-hearing brief must be given the opportunity to present oral argument, if requested no later than the date for filing exceptions, on the propriety of any proposed rate or other charge, classification, contract, practice, rule, or regulation. No rate or other charge, classification, contract, practice, rule or regulation shall be found just and reasonable unless it is consistent with Sections of this Article.

(d) Except where compliance with Section 8-401 of this Act is of urgent and immediate concern, no representative of a public utility may discuss with a commissioner, commissioner's assistant, or hearing examiner in a non-public setting a planned filing for a general rate increase. If a public utility makes a filing under this Section, then no substantive communication by any such person with a commissioner, commissioner's assistant or hearing examiner concerning the filing is permitted until a notice of hearing has been issued. After the notice of hearing has been issued, the only communications by any such person with a commissioner, commissioner's assistant, or hearing examiner concerning the filing permitted are communications permitted under Section 10-103 of this Act. If any such communication does occur, then

within 5 days of the docket being initiated all details relating to the communication shall be placed on the public record of the proceeding. The record shall include any materials, whether written, recorded, filmed, or graphic in nature, produced or reproduced on any media, used in connection with the communication. The record shall reflect the names of all persons who transmitted, received, or were otherwise involved in the communication, the duration of the communication, and whether the communication occurred in person or by other means. In the case of an oral communication, the record shall also reflect the location or locations of all persons involved in the communication and, if the communication occurred by telephone, the telephone numbers for the callers and recipients of the communication. A commissioner, commissioner's assistant, or hearing examiner who is involved in any such communication shall be recused from the affected proceeding. The Commission, or any commissioner or hearing examiner presiding over the proceeding shall, in the event of a violation of this Section, take action necessary to ensure that such violation does not prejudice any party or adversely affect the fairness of the proceedings including dismissing the affected proceeding. Nothing in this subsection (d) is intended to preclude otherwise allowable updates on issues that may be indirectly related to a general rate case filing because cost recovery for the underlying activity may be requested. Such updates may include, without limitation, issues related to

outages and restoration, credit ratings, security issuances, reliability, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission matters, Federal Communications Commission matters, regional reliability organizations, consumer education, or labor matters, provided that such updates may not include cost recovery in a planned rate case.

(Source: P.A. 96-33, eff. 7-10-09.)